ORFORD STRING QUARTET

QUARTET-IN-RESIDENCE

ANDREW DAWES, Violin

KENNETH PERKINS, Violin

TERENCE HELMER, Viola

MARCEL ST-CYR, Cello

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 1979

3 P.M.

WALTER HALL

PROGRAM

String Quartet in F Major, K590 — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Allegro moderato
Andante (first edition: Allegretto)
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegro

In May, 1789, Mozart received two commissions from Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia: six easy clavier sonatas for the King's daughter, Princess Frederike, and six quartets for the king himself - Friedrich Wilhelm was a keen cellist and this apparently explains the many prominent cello passages throughout the quartets Köchel 575 and 589 as well as the first movement of Köchel 590. At first, Mozart showed considerable enthusiasm for the quartet project. He had played for the King in Berlin on May 26 and by the time he returned to Vienna on June 4, the first quartet was finished; this was entered in this own thematic catalogue as "Ein Quartett...für Seine Mayestätt dem König in Preussen" (K575). Work on the remainder of the set proceeded less rapidly. Almost a year later, in May 1790, Mozart wrote to his friend and fellow Freemason Michael Puchberg, "(Financial worry) has prevented me all this time from finishing my quartets." A second quartet, Köchel 589, was completed that May and a third, Köchel 590, in June; a recent study of Mozart's autograph manuscripts has shown that the two were composed almost simultaneously: much of the third quartet was written before the second was finished.
With the passing of over a year, the King's commission seems to have been forgotten. On June 12, 1790 Mozart again wrote to Puchberg "I have now been obliged to give away my quartets (that most difficult labour) for a mere song, simply in order to have cash in hand to meet my present difficulties." The three quartets were not published until December 1791, shortly after Mozart's death, and they carry no dedication. Nor did Mozart compose six clavier sonatas for the King's daughter; only one sonata, Köchel 576, was composed after May 1789, and it is far from easy. The large number of unfinished or fragmentary compositions (including at least three for string quartet and six for piano) that Mozart left at this time suggests that the composer found writing difficult during the last few years of his life.
Köchel 590, then, is Mozart's last quartet.

Five Improvisations for String Quartet — Oskar Morawetz

Allegro non troppo
Adagio molto
Allegretto
Adagio
Allegro energico

The 1978-9 concert season has been Oskar Morawetz' busiest ever: eight different compositions have been performed (some several times) in Canada and the United States since last July and at least two more works will be performed within the next two months (including a performance of the Symphony No. 2 in Ankara, Turkey). Professor Morawetz' current commissions include works for horn (for Eugene Rittich, principal horn of the Toronto Symphony), flute (for Jeanne Baxtresser, principal flautist of the Toronto Symphony), and voice (for Maureen Forrester and based on Psalm 22).
Five Improvisations for String Quartet is Morawetz' fourth work in this medium. The String Quartet No. 1, composed as one of the requirements for a Bachelor of Music degree by Morawetz some four years after his arrival in Canada in 1940 (from his native Czechoslovakia), won a nation-wide competition sponsored by CAPAC (Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada, Limited) in 1945. String Quartet No. 2 was composed between 1952 and 1955 and has been widely performed by the Orford Quartet; String Quartet No.3 was composed in 1959.
Morawetz likes to write for strings: in addition to the quartets he has also composed at least three works for string orchestra.
Five Improvisations was written for the Orford Quartet and consists of five separate, thematically un-related movements: Allegro non troppo, Adagio molto, Allegretto, Adagio, and Allegro energico.

INTERMISSION

String Quartet in D Minor, D. 810 — Franz Schubert

Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Presto

Schubert's instrumental music is suffused with the spirit of his songs and several of his major instrumental compositions are

directly based on previously composed Lieder: the "Wanderer" Fantasy (1822: based on the song "Der Wanderer, 1816); the "Trout" Quintet (1819: on "Die Forelle", 1817); the Introduction and Variations in E Minor on a Theme from the Song Cycle, Die Schöne Müllerin, for Pianoforte and Violin (1824: on "Trockne Blumen, 1823), and the Fantasia in C for Pianoforte and Violin (1827: on "Sei mir gegrüsst", 1822).

In 1817 Schubert set Der Tod und das Mädchen, a poem of Matthias Claudius (1743-1815). From the song's dark d-minor opening to its gentle D-major conclusion, "death" is shown as something not be to feared by the living:

Das Madchen:	Vorüber! ach, vorüber! geh' wilder Knochenmann! Ich bin noch jung, geh' lieber! und rühre mich nicht an.	The Maiden: Pass by, oh, pass by, savage skeleton! I am still young, please go! and do not touch me.
Der Tod:	Gieb deine Hand, du schön und zart Gebild! bin Freund un komme nicht zu strafen. Sei gutes Muths! ich bin nicht wild, sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!	Death: Give me your hand, beautiful and gentle image! I am a friend and have not come to harm you. Be brave! I am not savage, you will sleep peacefully in my arms.

Between 1824 and 1826 Schubert composed a quartet, the second movement of which is a set of variations on the introduction and second half of Der Tod und das Mädchen. Unlike many of Schubert's other instrumental compositions, the "Death and the Maiden" Quartet was privately performed during the composer's lifetime although it is said to have had a cool reception.

Notes by Cliff Eisen

NEXT EVENTS: Opera Division Production of ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD
March 16, 17, 1979. MacMillan Theatre, 8 p.m.

Victor Braun, baritone, MacMillan Theatre, 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 18, 1979.